

Sūrah 77

Al-Mursalāt

(Those Sent Forth)

(Makkan Period)

Title

The expression *al-mursalāt* featuring in the opening verse of the *Sūrah* happens to be its title.

Period of Revelation

It emerges from its contents that it must have been revealed in the early Makkan period. On reading this *Sūrah*, along with the two *Sūrahs* preceding it – *Sūrah al-Qiyāmah* and *Sūrah al-Dahr*, and the two following it – *Sūrah al-Naba'* and *Sūrah al-Nāzi'āt*, they feature the same themes in multifaceted ways for the admonition of the Makkans. This suggest that all five were revealed in the same period.

Subject Matter and Themes

The *Sūrah* affirms the truth of the Resurrection and the Day of Judgement and informs people of the consequences for rejecting or affirming these truths.

Verses 1–7 adduce the arrangement of winds as a sign bearing out the veracity of the Qur'ān and the Prophet's tidings about the Resurrection. It is inevitable, for God the Absolutely Powerful, Who has put in place the amazing arrangement of the earth, can easily bring about the Resurrection. The wonderful wisdom underlying the above system underscores the need for the Hereafter. There is a purpose behind every act of God and nothing is vain and purposeless. Without the Afterlife, the present worldly order loses its meaning and purpose.

The Makkans repeatedly challenged the Prophet (peace be upon him) to bring upon them the forewarned Resurrection; only then would they believe in it. In verses 8–15, without citing their demand, a response is given, stating that the Resurrection is not something trivial, to be presented on the whims of any human being. It happens to be the Day of Judgement for all of humanity. God has already decreed its hour; it will occur at its affixed time. It will strike everyone so terribly that the disbelievers, who presently demand it mockingly, will be utterly panic-stricken. Then their fate will be decided by the testimony of their Messengers whose call they have rejected unabashedly. Only then will they realise how they have brought destruction upon themselves.

Verses 16–28 present arguments, one after another, for the need and occurrence of Resurrection and the Hereafter. Man's history, his creation, and the constitution of the earth which he inhabits all testify to the possibility and occurrence of Resurrection and the Hereafter. It is evident from the annals of history that all those nations who disbelieved in the Hereafter faced decline and destruction. This means that the occurrence of the Hereafter is such a reality that if a nation rejects and defies it, it invites its own destruction in the same way that a blind man rushes headlong into an approaching train and meets his miserable end. It also means that the universe is governed not only by physical laws, but also by moral laws, which are at work here. As a result, in this world the process of recompense is in operation. However, in the present life, this recompense cannot be dispensed in full. The moral laws of the universe therefore demand that, at a point of time, everyone should be recompensed in full for all good and evil deeds. It will thus compensate for the partial recompense in this world. The

second life after death is therefore essential for this. Likewise, if one reflects on man's birth, he cannot dare deny that God, Who let him grow from an insignificant sperm drop into an adult human being, cannot bring him back to life. The components of one's body do not vanish from the earth after his death. Rather, these survive. Man is nourished on all the treasures that the earth produces, and after death, he returns to the same earth. God, Who created man from clay in the first place, is quite capable of retrieving him from the earth after his death. One who reflects on God's power cannot deny this possibility. If one studies the issue in the perspective of Allah's wisdom, he will realise that He is perfectly justified in holding man answerable for the powers that He granted him. His infinite wisdom dictates that man should not be let off, rather he should be called to render his account.

Verses 28–40 and 41–45 describe the fate of the disbelievers and the believers in the Hereafter, respectively. The former refused to accept the existence of the Hereafter, whereas the latter, during their worldly life, strove to brighten their prospects for the next life. They embraced faith and shunned the evils of disbelief, thought, morality, actions, conduct, and character, which may offer worldly gains but destroy one's prospects in the Hereafter.

Finally, the deniers of the Hereafter and those refusing to worship God are warned that they may enjoy the pleasures of this world for a while. However, they are destined for an extremely terrible end. The discourse concludes on the assertion that whoever fails to derive guidance from the Qur'ān cannot obtain it from any other source.